ERIC CLAPTON PETER GREEN MICK FLEETWOOD STEVE WINWOOD DON "SUGARCANE" HARRIS HUGHIE FLINT
CHRIS MERCER HARVEY MANDEL ROGER DEAN JON MARK TONY REEVES RED HOLLOWAY

FRED JACKSON ERNIE WATTS NIGEL STANGER CLIFFORD SOLOMON BLUE MITCHELL
PAUL WILLIAMS RIP KANT STEVE THOMPSON BERNIE WATSON RANDY RESNICK

JOHN MAYALL

SO MANY ROADS

AN ANTHOLOGY 1964 1974

HIGHTIDE HARRIS PAUL LAGOS RON SELICO SOKO RICHARDSON FREDDY ROBINSON
CHARLES OWENS KEITH TILLMAN JERRY McGEE MARTIN HART VICTOR GASKIN

DECCA

polydor

UNIVERSAL

UMC

0600753291245

JON HISEMAN PAUL BUTTERFIELD JACK BRUCE MICK TAYLOR DICK HECKSTALL-SMITH KEEF HARTLEY
HENRY LOWTHER AYNSLEY DUNBAR JOHN McVIE JOHNNY ALMOND LARRY TAYLOR COLIN ALLEN

JOHN MAYALL

SO MANY ROADS

AN ANTHOLOGY

1964-1974

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BIEM | SABAM LC 00171 0600753291245

● PART ONE ●

1. Crawling Up A Hill 2:16
2. Mr. James 2:48

John Mayall: Vocals, Organ, Piano, Harmonica ● **Bernie Watson:** Guitar ● **John McVie:** Bass ● **Martin Hart:** Drums

Recorded 20th April 1964. Produced by Mike Vernon
A & B sides of single: Decca F 11900 released May 1964

3. When I'm Gone 3:15
4. R&B Time 2:22 {Incorporating: Night Train & Lucille}
5. Runaway 3:34
6. What's The Matter With You 2:41

John Mayall: Vocals, Harmonica, Cembalett, Organ and 9-string Guitar on "When I'm Gone" ● **Roger Dean:** Guitar ● **John McVie:** Bass ● **Hughie Flint:** Drums ● **Nigel Stanger:** Tenor and Slide Saxophone on "When I'm Gone", "R&B Time" and "What's the Matter with You".

Recorded at Klooks Kleek, The Railway Hotel, West Hampstead, London on Monday 7th December 1964.
Record supervision by Tony Clarke.
Taken from the album "John Mayall Plays John Mayall" **John Mayall & The Bluesbreakers:** Decca LK 4680 released March 1965

7. Crocodile Walk 2:13
8. Blues City Shake Down 2:22

John Mayall: Vocals, Organ, Piano and Harmonica ● **Roger Dean:** Guitar ● **John McVie:** Bass ● **Hughie Flint:** Drums

Recorded 26th February 1965. Produced by Mike Vernon
A & B sides of single: Decca F 12120 released April 1965

9. I'm Your Witchdoctor 2:09
10. Telephone Blues 3:56

John Mayall: Vocals, Organ, Harmonica ● **Eric Clapton:** Guitar ● **John McVie:** Bass ● **Hughie Flint:** Drums

Recorded in October 1965. Produced by Jimmy Page
A & B sides of single: Immediate IM012 released October 1965

11. On Top Of The World 2:46

John Mayall: Vocals, Organ, Piano ● **Eric Clapton:** Guitar ● **John McVie:** Bass ● **Hughie Flint:** Drums

Recorded in December 1965. Produced by Jimmy Page
First issued as part of the compilation "**Blues Anytime Vol. 2:** An Anthology of British Blues": Immediate IMCP 105 released December 1967

12. They Call It Stormy Monday 4:33
13. Have You Ever Loved A Woman 6:42

John Mayall: Vocals, Organ ● **Eric Clapton:** Guitar ● **Jack Bruce:** Bass ● **Hughie Flint:** Drums

Recorded at The Flamingo Club, London on 28th November 1965. "They Call it Stormy Monday" first released as part of the compilation "Looking Back" issued as Decca SKL 5010 in 1969. "Have You Ever Loved a Woman" first released as part of the compilation "Primal Solos" issued as London Records LC 50003 in 1977.

14. All Your Love 3:34
15. Double Crossing Time 3:02
16. Steppin' Out 2:28
17. What'd I Say 4:26
18. Key To Love 2:07
19. Parchman Farm 2:20

John Mayall: Vocals, Organ, Piano, Harmonica ● **Eric Clapton:** Guitar, Vocals ● **John McVie:** Bass ● **Hughie Flint:** Drums - Augmented by: **John Almond:** Baritone Saxophone ● on "Double Crossing Time" ● **Alan Skidmore:** Tenor Saxophone ● **John Almond:** Baritone Saxophone ● **Dennis Healey:** Trumpet on "Key to Love" and "Steppin' Out"

Recorded in April 1966. Produced by Mike Vernon
Taken from the album "Blues Breakers" **John Mayall with Eric Clapton:** Decca LK 4804 released July 1966

20. Looking Back 2:35
21. So Many Roads 4:42

John Mayall: Vocals, Guitar, Piano • **Peter Green:** Guitar • **John McVie:** Bass • **Aynsley Dunbar:** Drums • **John Almond:** Baritone Saxophone • **Nick Newell:** Tenor Saxophone • **Henry Lowther:** Trumpet

Recorded 30th September 1966. Produced by Mike Vernon
A & B sides of single: Decca F 12506 released October 1966

22. Long Night 2:01

John Mayall: Guitar • **Steve Winwood:** Organ • **John McVie:** Bass • **Aynsley Dunbar:** Drums

Recorded in October 1966. Produced by Mike Vernon
Credited to John Mayall and Steve Anglo
Taken from the album "Raw Blues": Ace of Clubs SCL 1220 released January 1967

23. Dust My Blues 2:45
24. The Stumble 2:52

John Mayall: Vocals, Organ, Piano, Guitar • **Peter Green:** Guitar • **John McVie:** Bass • **Aynsley Dunbar:** Drums

Recorded 11th, 12th, 19th and 24th October and November 11th 1966. Produced by Mike Vernon
Taken from the album "A Hard Road" **John Mayall And The Bluesbreakers**: Decca SKL 4853 released February 1967

• PART TWO •

1. You Don't Love Me 2:48
2. It's Over 2:48
3. The Super-Natural 2:55

John Mayall: Vocals, Organ, Piano, Harmonica, Guitar • **Peter Green:** Guitar, Vocals on "You Don't Love Me" • **John McVie:** Bass • **Aynsley Dunbar:** Drums

Recorded 11th, 12th, 19th and 24th October and November 11th 1966. Produced by Mike Vernon
Taken from the album "A Hard Road" **John Mayall And The Bluesbreakers**: Decca SKL 4853 released February 1967

4. Sitting In The Rain 2:56

John Mayall: Vocals, Guitar • **Peter Green:** Guitar • **John McVie:** Bass • **Aynsley Dunbar:** Percussion

Recorded 11th October 1966. Produced by Mike Vernon
A-side of single: Decca F 12545 released January 1967

5. Ridin' On The L&N 2:26
6. All My Life 4:22

John Mayall: Vocals, 9-String Guitar, Piano • **Paul Butterfield:** Harmonica, Vocals • **Peter Green:** Guitar • **John McVie:** Bass • **Aynsley Dunbar:** Drums

Recorded in January 1967. Produced by Mike Vernon
Taken from the EP "John Mayall's Bluesbreakers with Paul Butterfield": Decca DFE 8673 released January 1967

7. Double Trouble 3:20

John Mayall: Vocals, Organ • **Peter Green:** Guitar • **John McVie:** Bass • **Mick Fleetwood:** Drums

Recorded 18th April 1967. Produced by Mike Vernon
A-side of single: Decca F 12621 released June 1967

8. Suspicions (Part One) 2:46

John Mayall: Vocals, Guitar • **Mick Taylor:** Guitar • **Paul Williams:** Bass • **Keef Hartley:** Drums • **Dick Heckstall-Smith:** Tenor and Soprano Saxophones • **Chris Mercer:** Tenor Saxophone

Recorded 14th September 1967. Produced by Mike Vernon
A-side of single: Decca F 12684 released October 1967

9. Oh Pretty Woman 3:31
10. Snowy Wood 3:35
11. Checkin' Up On My Baby 3:55

John Mayall: Vocals, Organ, Guitar, Harmonica • **Mick Taylor:** Guitar • **John McVie:** Bass • **Keef Hartley:** Drums • **Rip Kant:** Baritone Saxophone • **Chris Mercer:** Tenor Saxophone

Recorded July 11th and 12th 1967. Produced by Mike Vernon
Taken from the album "Crusade" **John Mayall's Bluesbreakers**: Decca SKL 4890 released September 1967

12. No More Tears 3:08
13. Brand New Start 3:22

John Mayall: Vocals, Piano, Harmonica, Guitar, Bass • **Keef Hartley:** Drums

Recorded 1st May 1967. Produced by Mike Vernon and John Mayall
Taken from the album "The Blues Alone" **John Mayall:** Ace of Clubs SCL 1243 released November 1967

14. Picture On The Wall 3:01

John Mayall: Vocals, Guitar, Piano • **Peter Green:** Guitar • **Keef Hartley:** Drums

Recorded 4th & 5th December 1967. Produced by Mike Vernon
A-side of single: Decca F 12732 released February 1968

15. Look In The Mirror 4:01
16. No Reply 3:06
17. Hartley Quits 2:54

John Mayall: Vocals, Piano, Organ, Guitar, Harmonica • **Mick Taylor:** Guitar • **Tony Reeves:** Bass • **Jon Hiseman:** Drums • **Dick Heckstall-Smith:** Tenor and Soprano Saxophone • **Chris Mercer:** Tenor and Baritone Saxophone • **Henry Lowther:** Cornet, Violin

Recorded 3rd, 9th, 24th and 30th April 1968.
Produced by Mike Vernon and John Mayall
Taken from the album "Bare Wires" **John Mayall's Bluesbreakers**: Decca SKL 4945 released June 1968

18. 2401 3:54

John Mayall: Vocals, Guitar, Organ, Harmonica • **Mick Taylor:** Guitar • **Steve Thompson:** Bass • **Colin Allen:** Drums

Recorded 26th August 1968. Produced by Mike Vernon and John Mayall
A-side of single: Decca F 12846 released November 1968

19. Walking On Sunset 2:45
20. Medicine Man 2:45
21. Miss James 2:29
22. Fly Tomorrow 9:02

John Mayall: Vocals, Guitar, Piano, Organ, Harmonica • **Mick Taylor:** Guitar • **Steve Thompson:** Bass • **Colin Allen:** Drums

Recorded 26th – 28th August 1968.
Produced by Mike Vernon and John Mayall
Taken from the album "Blues from Laurel Canyon" **John Mayall:** Decca SKL 4972 released November 1968

PART THREE

1. The Laws Must Change 7:14
2. California 9:20
3. Room To Move 4:40

John Mayall: Vocals, Harmonica, Slide Guitar, Telecaster 6-String Guitar, Tambourine, Mouth Percussion • **Jon Mark:** Acoustic Finger-style Guitar • **Steve Thompson:** Bass • **Johnny Almond:** Tenor and Alto Saxophones, Flutes, Mouth Percussion

Recorded at the Fillmore East, New York City on 12th July 1969
Produced by John Mayall
Taken from the album "The Turning Point" **John Mayall:** Polydor 583 571 released November 1969

4. Sleeping By Her Side 5:01 *

John Mayall: Vocals, Harmonica, Slide Guitar, Telecaster 6-String Guitar, Tambourine, Mouth Percussion • **Jon Mark:** Acoustic Finger-style Guitar • **Steve Thompson:** Bass • **Johnny Almond:** Tenor and Alto Saxophones, Flutes, Mouth Percussion

Recorded at the Fillmore East, New York City on 12th July 1969
Produced by John Mayall

*** PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED IN THE UK**

5. Don't Waste My Time 3:09
6. Something New 4:36
7. Waiting For The Right Time 5:32
8. Counting The Days 5:29

John Mayall: Vocals, Harmonica, Keyboards, Lead Guitar, 12-String Guitar • **Jon Mark:** Finger-style Guitar, 12-String Guitar • **Steve Thompson:** Bass • **Johnny Almond:** Tenor and Alto Saxophones, Flutes

Recorded in January and March 1970. Produced by John Mayall
Taken from the album "Empty Rooms" **John Mayall:** Polydor 583 580 released April 1970

9. Off The Road 2:46
10. Crying 6:24
11. Nature's Disappearing 5:53

John Mayall: Vocals, Guitar, Harmonica • **Harvey Mandel:** Lead Guitar • **Don 'Sugarcane' Harris:** Violin • **Larry Taylor:** Bass

Recorded in July 1970. Produced by John Mayall
Taken from the album "USA Union" **John Mayall:** Polydor 2425 020 released November 1970

12. Accidental Suicide 6:12
13 Prisons On The Road 4:14
14. Unanswered Questions 4:38

John Mayall: Vocals, Piano, Rhythm Guitar, Harmonica • **Eric Clapton:** Lead Guitar on "Accidental Suicide"and "Prisons on the Road" • **Harvey Mandel:** Lead Guitar on "Unanswered Questions" • **Mick Taylor:** Lead Guitar on "Accidental Suicide" • **Don 'Sugarcane' Harris:** Violin • **Larry Taylor:** Bass • **Paul Lagos:** Drums on "Prisons on the Road" • **Keef Hartley:** Drums on "Unanswered Questions"

Recorded in November 1970. Produced by John Mayall
Taken from the album "Back To The Roots" **John Mayall:** Polydor 2657 005 released June 1971

PART FOUR

1. Television Eye 7:29

John Mayall: Vocals, Piano, Rhythm Guitar, Harmonica • **Harvey Mandel:** Lead Guitar • **Larry Taylor:** Bass • **Johnny Almond:** Tenor Saxophone • **Keef Hartley:** Drums

Recorded in November 1970. Produced by John Mayall
Taken from the album "Back To The Roots" **John Mayall:** Polydor 2657 005 released June 1971

2. Memories 5:00
3. Nobody Cares 3:55

John Mayall: Vocals, Rhythm Guitar, 12-String Guitar, Piano, Harmonica • **Jerry McGee:** Lead Guitar • **Larry Taylor:** Bass

Recorded in July 1971. Produced by John Mayall
Taken from the album "Memories" **John Mayall, Jerry McGee, Larry Taylor:** Polydor 2425 085 released 1971

4. Good Time Boogie 9:08
5. Got To Be This Way 6:50
6. Mess Around 2:52
7. Country Road 7:13

John Mayall: Vocals, Guitar, Piano, Harmonica • **Freddy Robinson:** Guitar • **Blue Mitchell:** Trumpet • **Clifford Solomon:** Alto and Tenor saxophones • **Larry Taylor:** Bass • **Ron Selico:** Drums

Recorded in November 1971, Boston, Massachusetts and in December 1971, Hunter College, NY. Produced by John Mayall
Taken from the album "Jazz Blues Fusion" **John Mayall:** Polydor 2425 103 released 1972

8. Moving On 4:26
9. Things Go Wrong 6:35
10. High Pressure Living 6:45

John Mayall: Vocals, Guitar, Piano, Harmonica • **Freddy Robinson:** Guitar • **Blue Mitchell:** Trumpet • **Clifford Solomon:** Alto and Tenor saxophones • **Larry Taylor:** Bass • **Victor Gaskin:** String Bass • **Keef Hartley:** Drums • **Ernie Watts:** Tenor Saxophone • **Charles Owens:** Tenor and Soprano Saxophones, Flute • **Fred Jackson:** Baritone and Tenor Saxophones

Recorded in July 1972 at the Whisky A Go Go, Los Angeles
Produced by John Mayall
Taken from the album "Moving On" **John Mayall:** Polydor 2391 047 released 1973

11. Driving 'til The Break Of Day 5:03
12. Burning Sun 5:06

John Mayall: Vocals, 12-String Guitar, Slide Guitar, Piano, Harmonica • **Freddy Robinson:** Guitar • **Blue Mitchell:** Trumpet • **Red Holloway:** Alto and Tenor saxophones, Flute • **Sugarcane Harris:** Violin • **Victor Gaskin:** Bass • **Keef Hartley:** Drums

Recorded in May 1973. Produced by Don Nix
Taken from the album "Ten Years Are Gone" **John Mayall:** Polydor 2683 036 released 1973

13. Little Kitten 2:32
14. Gasoline Blues 3:40

John Mayall: Vocals, 12-String Guitar, Organ, Piano • **Randy Resnick:** Lead Guitar • **Hightide Harris:** Lead Guitar • **Red Holloway:** Saxophones and Flute • **Larry Taylor:** Bass • **Soko Richardson:** Drums

Recorded in March 1974. Produced by Tom Wilson and Erik the Norwegian. An Angel City Production
Taken from the album "The Latest Edition" **John Mayall:** Polydor 2391 141 released 1974

JOHN
MAYALL
SO MANY ROADS
AN ANTHOLOGY
1964-1974

Main photo: The Bluesbreakers' first publicity photo session, Spring 1963: John Mayall, John McVie, Peter Ward and Bernie Watson.

Below: John Mayall at the time of the Powerhouse Four, with Peter Ward in the background.

IF one was to compile a concise history of British popular music of the 1960's and 1970's, the figure of John Mayall would loom large time and time again as the catalyst and mentor to a host of fine musicians who would all make invaluable and indelible contributions to popular music on a global scale, and all initially serving apprenticeships, sometimes long, sometimes short, as members of Mayall's ever changing line-up of groups. Born in Macclesfield, Cheshire on November 29th 1933, John Mayall pioneered the acceptance of the Blues as a valid musical art form in Britain at a time when there were few musicians brave enough to do so. Always remaining true to his beliefs and values and eschewing commercial considerations, he nurtured some of the finest popular musicians to emerge from the British Isles. Notable members of his band the Bluesbreakers included such luminaries as Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce, Peter Green, Mick Taylor, Mick Fleetwood, John McVie, Keef Hartley and Aynsley Dunbar. Without Mayall it is doubtful if they would have scaled the heights many of them later reached. John Mayall's recordings for Decca records between 1964 and 1968 and Polydor Records between 1969 and 1974 are perhaps some of the finest examples of blues-influenced work ever committed to tape by a British musician and serve as a continual reminder of his innovation and musicianship.

John discovered blues and jazz music at early age after being exposed to his father's record collection which featured recordings by artists such as Louis Armstrong, Django Reinhardt and Charlie Christian. By the age of thirteen he had become proficient on guitar, ukulele and piano, being particularly fond of musicians such as Meade "Lux" Lewis, Josh White, Big Bill Broonzy and Muddy Waters. A keen artist, John enrolled at Manchester Junior School of Art in 1945 where he remained until 1949. At the age of 15 John gained his first public exposure when he appeared in The Manchester Evening News due to his taking up residence in a self-built tree house at the bottom of the family garden (his penchant for living in tree houses would continue on and off until his early twenties with a wooded residence even serving as the marital home for John and his first wife Pamela).

Following a spell working as a window dresser Mayall spent three years in the Army and served in the Korean conflict. Whilst spending leave from duty in Japan he purchased his first electric guitar. Upon his return home John became a student at Manchester College of Art and whilst there formed his first group, the Powerhouse Four, comprising fellow student Peter Ward on drums and a rotating number of other part-time musicians. By 1959 John had secured gainful daytime employment as an art director for a graphic design company in Manchester. His evenings were spent performing with various musicians on the North West England club circuit. His life was to change one night in 1962 when he opened for Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated at the Bodega Jazz Club. The musicians befriended one another through their mutual love of the blues and by Mayall's own admission, Korner acted as his musical mentor.

★ EL RIO
FRIDAY, FEB. 14—JAZZ CLUB
presenting DEREK ATKINSON'S DIXIELAND SEVEN
plus THE JOHN MAYALL POWERHOUSE FOUR
Commencing 7-30 p.m.
SATURDAY, FEB. 15—CABARET NIGHT
with the return of the sensational JACK MATALON, star
of ITV's "Stranger in Town" plus dancing to TERRY GILL
and his SEXTET. Commencing 7-30 p.m
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 19—MORE ROCK WITH
MORE POPS !
and featuring THE WILD FIVE SKIFFLE GROUP
Commencing 7-30 p.m.
VICTORIA STREET, MACCLESFIELD

The same year John joined The Blues Syndicate, a Manchester based group formed by trumpet player John Rowlands. The group also featured an inspired young drummer, Hughie Flint. Remaining in constant contact with Alexis Korner, Mayall was eventually persuaded to journey south to London to become a professional musician. In January 1963 John left Manchester to live in London.

Through Korner he was introduced to like-minded musicians seeking to play in a Blues band and by February 1963 Mayall had established his first group which he named The Bluesbreakers. For the first three months of the bands existence line-ups changed with bewildering speed, with some member's tenure lasting just one performance. A notable fleeting member of The Bluesbreakers in those early

THE WHO
MARIANNE FAITHFULL
CLIFF BENNETT and the REBEL ROUSERS
SOLOMON BURKE
SPENCER DAVIS
10 6 ALL DAY 2.0–11.30 P.M.
UXBRIDGE BLUES AND FOLK FESTIVAL
SAT. JUNE 19 2.0–11.30
UXBRIDGE SHOW
NEAR SWIMMING AND STATION
ZOOT MONEY
JOHN MAYALL
THE BIRDS
DAVE WHITTLING
RAY MARTIN
LONG JOHN BALDRY
WEATHER GOOD - OPEN AIR !! LICENSED BARS !!
WEATHER BAD - UNDER MARQUEES !! GRAND EVENING FESTIVAL DANCE !!
TICKET PRICES: 7 6 AFTERNOON OR EVENING AND 10 6 AFTERNOON AND EVENING COMBINED TICKET

John Mayall's Bluesbreakers play the Uxbridge Blues & Folk Festival in June 1965.

months was the innovative folk and blues guitarist Davy Graham. Bass guitarists included Ricky Brown and Pete Burford. By April that year John Mayall had recruited a bass guitarist who was to remain a cornerstone of his group for the next four and half years, John McVie. McVie had made Mayall's acquaintance whilst performing in a group more akin to British pop acts such as Cliff Richard and the Shadows rather than a bona fide blues outfit. Mayall insisted that McVie borrow some of his Blues records to get a feeling for the music he was performing and after tuition from his new mentor McVie became a member of The Bluesbreakers.

Aside from McVie's involvement, the group continued to undergo further line-up changes whilst performing regularly on the South Eastern R&B circuit at venues such as the Ealing Club, The Flamingo and the Six Bells. The Bluesbreakers first major breakthrough came with an appearance at The Marquee club in Wardour Street where the band supported Manfred Mann. This led to a further performance where the band headlined at the legendary London club on 4th November 1963, by which time the line-up of the Bluesbreakers had settled with John Mayall (vocals, keyboards, harmonica), Bernie Watson, formerly of the Cyril Davies All Stars, (guitar), John McVie (bass) and Mayall's friend from Manchester, Peter Ward (drums).

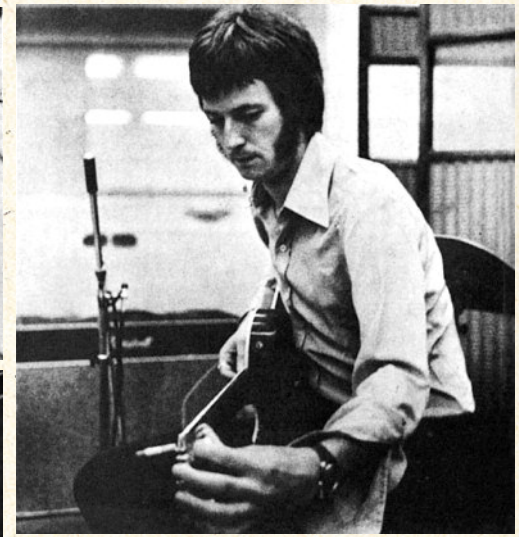
John Mayall's Bluesbreakers soon became a regular attraction at The Marquee Club and received enthusiastic coverage in the magazine R&B Monthly. The publisher of the magazine, Mike Vernon, was also a staff producer for Decca records and, thanks to Vernon's championing, Decca awarded the band a one-off single contract. On April 20th 1964 the Bluesbreakers entered Decca studios in West Hampstead to record their first vinyl offering, "Crawling up a Hill" and "Mr. James". By the time of the session Peter Ward had returned to a job as a graphic artist in Manchester to be replaced by Martin Hart. Released as Decca F 11900 in May 1964, the single gained favourable reviews but achieved sales of only 500 copies.

The Bluesbreakers underwent yet more changes with the departure of Martin Hart followed by that of Bernie Watson. To fill the vacant drum stool Mayall called upon the services of Hughie Flint, who had previously played with Mayall in Manchester as a semi-professional musician. Guitarist Roger Dean proved a more than able replacement for the departed Watson. This new line-up of the Bluesbreakers then undertook a four week British tour supporting the legendary John Lee Hooker, also acting as Hooker's backing group. This extensive series of concerts brought the band to the attention of a wider public and resurrected Decca records' interest in the group.

This interest led to an offer to record a live album at Klook's Kleek, a well known R&B club night which took place at The Railway Hotel, West Hampstead (co-incidentally next door to Decca studios). The close proximity of the club to Decca's recording centre made location recording simpler, as recording cables were run through an open window of the studio into the venue. Thus, the 7th December 1964 saw the recording of John Mayall's first LP. The set list that night comprised mostly John Mayall original compositions, with the exception of cover versions of "Lucille" and "Night Train". The band was joined by Nigel Stanger on saxophone for the set which captured the magic of an early Bluesbreakers live performance. Buoyed by an enthusiastic audience, the recordings made that winter's night were an example of British R&B at its best. Thanks to the undaunted enthusiasm of producer Mike Vernon, Decca records commissioned a further studio session by the band on February 26th 1965, during which four songs were committed to tape, including "Crocodile Walk" and "Blues City Shakedown". The session was soon followed with a notable TV appearance by The Bluesbreakers backing T-Bone Walker on the legendary TV show "Ready Steady Go!" in early March which served as a precursor to a UK tour as a support act to Walker.

The Bluesbreakers May 1965 - June 1966: Eric Clapton, John McVie, John Mayall & Hughie Flint

Prior to deciding which tracks to issue as a single, Decca released the live recordings made at The Railway Hotel as "John Mayall Plays John Mayall" (Decca LK 4680) in March 1965. April 2nd saw "Crocodile Walk" and "Blues City Shakedown" released as a single (Decca F 12120). The month of April 1965 was also to see John Mayall make one of the most momentous decisions of his musical career after hearing the B-side of the latest single by the up



and coming British R&B group The Yardbirds. The instrumental track entitled “Got to Hurry” featured a blazing performance by Lead Guitarist Eric Clapton, who had announced his departure from The Yardbirds prior to the release of the single, citing dissatisfaction at the “commercial” direction the band were heading as evidenced by the A-side of the record, “For Your Love” (an innovative groundbreaking recording in its own right). Mayall was convinced that Eric Clapton was the guitarist he had been seeking since founding the Bluesbreakers.

Eric Clapton was born in Ripley, Surrey on 30th March 1945. Raised by his Grandparents, the slightly introverted Clapton developed a love of American Rhythm and Blues and traditional Blues in his early teens and soon took up the guitar, an instrument for which he demonstrated an early aptitude. He attended Kingston-Upon-Thames College of Art upon leaving school, but was expelled from the college for playing his guitar during lectures. Whilst working as a manual labourer on building sites Clapton also performed in fledgling R&B groups such as The Roosters and Casey Jones and The Engineers.

His considerable prowess did not remained un-noticed and in the autumn of 1963 he replaced Andrew “Top” Topham as lead guitarist in The Yardbirds, a group who were about to succeed The Rolling Stones as resident band at the leading London R&B Club the Craw Daddy (run by their manager Giorgio Gomelski). The Yardbirds first recordings were made when the group backed Blues legend Sonny Boy Williamson on his UK tour at the end of 1963. Giorgio Gomelski soon secured a recording contract for the group with EMI’s Columbia label resulting in the release of the single “I Wish You Would” b/w “A Certain Girl” in May 1964. The album “Five Live Yardbirds” was recorded around the same time at The Marquee Club, proving to be a showcase for Eric Clapton’s ever increasing confidence and ability.

It was also during this period that Clapton adopted the nickname of "Slowhand" as a result of audiences slowly clapping their hands whilst Clapton changed broken guitar strings caused by his frenetic string bending style of playing. When Eric received the approach from John Mayall to join the Bluesbreakers, he needed little convincing. In Mayall's band Clapton would be able to develop an urban blues style of guitar playing that would remain unique and legendary. The debut recording session by The Bluesbreakers with their newly recruited guitarist took place at the studios of the BBC Light Programme for "Saturday Club" on April 26th.

From the offset Mayall was intent on broadening Clapton's understanding of Blues music. To this end Mayall opened the ears of the guitarist to musicians such as Freddie King. It was through this exposure to King's guitar playing that Clapton switched from playing a Fender Telecaster to a Gibson Les Paul, after seeing a picture of King playing the instrument.

The combination of a Gibson Les Paul played through a British designed Marshall amplifier gave Eric Clapton his own unique sound that placed him leagues ahead of any other British guitarist at that time and was to make the recordings he made with John Mayall truly groundbreaking and of an influence greater than could be imagined.

Audiences at those early Bluesbreakers shows at clubs such as the Flamingo and Klook's Kleek in London were awe struck by the new lease of life within the band and their reputation steadily grew. This was particularly evidenced by the fact that Bob Dylan (then on tour in Britain) invited the Bluesbreakers for an informal jam session at Levy's recording studio in London on May 12th 1965 which was committed to tape (although no recordings have ever appeared). Despite their new injection of energy, the Bluesbreakers found themselves in search of a new record company when Decca records (ignoring the protestations of producer Mike Vernon) declined to release any further recordings. An approach by Andrew Loog Oldham (manager of the Rolling Stones) led to the Bluesbreakers recording a session for Oldham's newly established Immediate records at Pye recording studios in early June 1965. The production was by a highly respected young session guitarist, Jimmy Page. The strident "I'm Your Witchdoctor" and the dark "Telephone Blues" were to eventually be released as a single in October 1965 and demonstrated the new found power of John Mayall's Bluesbreakers.

Throughout the summer months of 1965 Mayall's band performed endlessly to ever increasing attendances, but at the end of August Eric Clapton informed Mayall that he intended to travel around the world with some art school friends and would be leaving The Bluesbreakers. Clapton's decision came as a major blow to Mayall who had rightly felt that the current incarnation of The Bluesbreakers was the best since the group's inception. John was faced with little choice but to fulfil his existing live commitments with a series of replacement guitarists.

Clapton's replacements over the ensuing two months included John McLaughlin, John Weider and John Slaughter and latterly Geoff Krivit (all of whom, with the notable exception of McLaughlin, were sadly not in the same class as Clapton). At a concert at The Zodiac Club in Putney a young guitarist by the name of Peter Green introduced himself to Mayall and insisted that he was a better guitarist than the current incumbent. After much pestering Mayall finally decided to

give Green an audition which resulted in his joining The Bluesbreakers. In the meantime Eric Clapton's worldwide jaunt had got as far as Greece before his money ran out and he was forced to return to England. Clapton contacted his old boss and was immediately reinstated as John Mayall's lead guitarist. After only three concerts with The Bluesbreakers, Green was informed that his services would not be required after all.

Upon his reinstatement within the ranks of John's band, Eric entered the studio with producer Mike Vernon to record two pieces, one of which was "Bernard Jenkins". The session was privately funded by Mike Vernon partly as an attempt to re-interest Decca records into signing the band once more, as musically the Bluesbreakers had evolved into one of London's hottest Rhythm and Blues outfits. Alas, this effort initially failed to rekindle the enthusiasm of Decca. Clapton's return to the Bluesbreakers also coincided with a change of bass guitarist within their ranks. John McVie made way for a Scottish musician of considerable musical talent, Jack Bruce (previously with the Graham Bond Organisation). This line-up was to remain stable for only a matter of weeks before Bruce departed to join Manfred Mann (performing on their hit single "Pretty Flamingo"). However, during this period, Mayall captured a live performance on 28th November 1965 at the Flamingo Club in London on a portable mono reel to reel tape recorder. Although not studio quality, the recordings remain the only live document of the Bluesbreakers with both Eric Clapton and Jack Bruce in the line-up.

Jack Bruce was replaced by John Bradley for a couple of live appearances before John McVie returned to undertake bass playing duties once more. His first appearance was at a further session recorded for Immediate records on December 2nd 1965 at Pye studios, again overseen by Jimmy Page. Of the resulting tracks recorded, "On Top of the World", was destined to remain unreleased until December 1967 when it appeared as part of the compilation "Blues Anytime" (Immediate IMSP 015).

1966 began with a flurry of club concerts in the South East of England and the news that Mike Vernon had finally persuaded Decca records to commit to a further recording contract with Mayall. The months of hard work building up a fine stage act had finally borne fruit. Thus in March 1966 John Mayall, Eric Clapton and the Bluesbreakers entered Decca Studio Two in West Hampstead to begin work on their first studio album. From the offset, it was clear that something magical was taking place. The sound Eric Clapton was achieving through the combination of Gibson Les Paul and Marshall Combo Amplifier cranked to previously unimagined volume, were unique for the time. Mike Vernon would later comment; "I was very impressed, particularly by the aggression of Eric's playing and the toughness. Roger Dean, their previous guitar player, wasn't a bad player, but he was more influenced by T-Bone Walker. Eric had more of the spirit of Freddie King, but Eric's playing transformed the band. There were now also two focal points, Eric and John, who was an inspired band leader".

Clapton's dexterity was superbly demonstrated on the instrumental "Steppin' Out", which featured the accompaniment of Alan Skidmore and John Almond on saxophones and Dennis Healy on trumpet. Other highlights of the album included an excellent cover of Mose Allison's "Parchman Farm", "Double Crossing Time", "Key to Love" and a cover of Ray Charles' "What'd I Say".

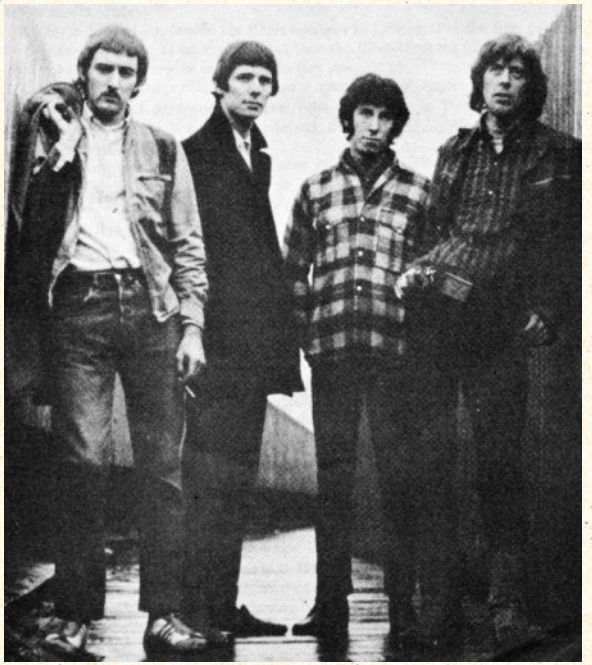
Mixing of the album was completed on April 2nd, and with little time to recover, the Bluesbreakers hit the road once more on a near continuous basis over the next three months. At a concert in Oxford the Bluesbreakers were joined on stage by former Graham Bond Organisation drummer Peter "Ginger" Baker. Recently departed from Bond's outfit, Baker took the opportunity to jam with Mayall's band during the encore of their performance. It was after this concert that

Baker approached Clapton to join a new trio he was intent on forming. Clapton showed interest, but stated that he would be tempted if Jack Bruce could be persuaded to join the new band. Both Baker and Bruce had endured a fiery relationship whilst both serving with Graham Bond, but differences were put aside in favour of musical excellence. Following a jam session at Ginger Baker's home, Clapton was convinced enough to hand in his notice with the Bluesbreakers to join Baker's new trio which rejoiced in the moniker of Cream. Ironically, Eric's resignation came just days after the release of "Bluesbreakers: John Mayall with Eric Clapton" as Decca LK 4804. Furthermore, the album became a major chart hit, reaching a height of number six in the UK. Mayall was now faced with the awkward dilemma of having to search for a guitar player who not only matched Clapton's ability, but would also be comfortable in having to live up to the expectations of both public and press, most of whom would be making immediate comparisons.

The Bluesbreakers' June 1966: John McVie, Hughie Flint, Peter Green and John Mayall.

On July 17th 1966, John Mayall announced that the new guitarist in the Bluesbreakers would be Peter Green, who had enjoyed a brief spell with the band in September 1965. Although differing in style to Clapton, Green was an equally innovative performer. Mayall was

indeed fortunate that he had found a more than able replacement in Peter Green. Born Peter Greenbaum in October 1946, he had served his musical apprenticeship with Bobby Denim and the Dominoes, The Muskrats and the Tridents. When Mayall had decided to replace Green with the returning Eric Clapton after Peter had performed a mere three concerts with the Bluesbreakers, Green was determined to make a name for himself on the London blues scene and he quickly joined the group Peter Bardens' Looners which evolved into Shotgun Express, (featuring both Rod Stewart and Beryl Marsden on vocals), before being approached by Mayall once again in July 1966 when Eric Clapton announced his intention to leave The Bluesbreakers for good.



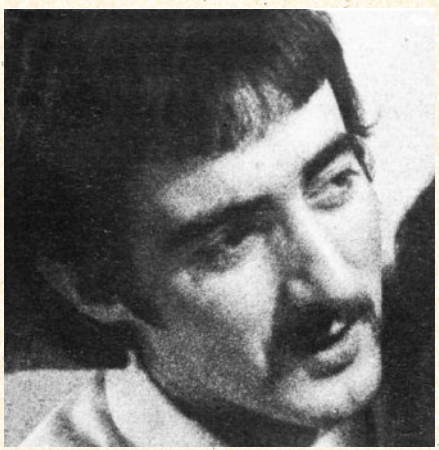
The Bluesbreakers' July 1966 - May 1967: John McVie, Aynsley Dunbar, Peter Green and John Mayall.

After some deliberation Green decided to take up Mayall's offer. Within eight weeks of Green's arrival, the Bluesbreakers endured further upheaval when long time drummer Hughie Flint departed to join Alexis Korner's band. His replacement was to be Aynsley Dunbar (a Liverpudlian who had previous stints with The Merseysippi Jazz Band, Derrie Wilkie and The Pressmen and Freddie Starr). John Mayall's fear that crowds would be initially hostile to Green was realised to some extent, with audience members at early concerts insisting on shouting for Eric Clapton. With this backdrop Green entered the studio for the first time with Mayall in September 1966 to record the single "Looking Back" b/w "So Many Roads" (Decca F12545) released in October. The single's B-side would be an insight into the potential Green had as a guitar player and went some way to silencing those who thought of him as just a Clapton imitator. That same month also saw recording sessions commence with producer Mike Vernon, for the next Bluesbreakers album, "A Hard Road". During these sessions John would also team up with guest musician Steve Winwood of the Spencer Davis Group to record the instrumental track "Long Night", a piece consigned to Decca's vaults until January 1967 when it appeared on the budget anthology "Raw Blues" (Ace of Clubs SCL 1220). For contractual reasons, Winwood's appearance was credited to Steve Anglo on the album sleeve.

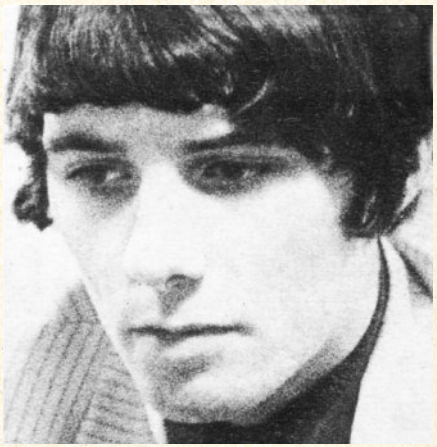
It was also at this point that John Mayall came close to losing Aynsley Dunbar to a stunning young American guitarist, newly arrived in London, who was auditioning for a drummer and bass player to comprise a trio that would take his name. As Chas Chandler later recounted, when Jimi Hendrix was searching for a suitable drummer, both Aynsley Dunbar and Mitch Mitchell were equally in the running for the job. Unable to choose between Dunbar and Mitchell, Hendrix and Chandler decided the matter with the toss of a coin and Dunbar returned to The Bluesbreakers without Mayall being any the wiser.

Considering the personnel upheaval of the past few months, the Bluesbreakers recordings would make for a very strong body of

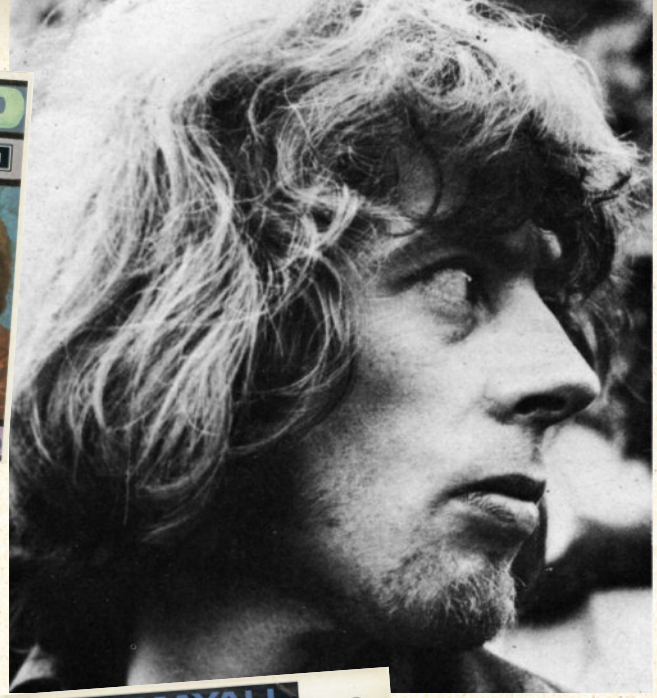
Peter Green



John McVie



Aynsley Dunbar



work. Mayall contributed the majority of material to the album, while Peter Green sang on "You Don't Love Me". However, it was Green's playing on "The Stumble" and on his own instrumental "The Supernatural" that silenced detractors. A Brass section of Johnny Almond, Alan Skidmore and Ray Warleigh was brought in to augment the band on several tracks. The final session for "A Hard Road" took place on November 11th 1966, but within two weeks the Bluesbreakers returned to the West Hampstead studios to record an EP with American Blues star Paul Butterfield, who was visiting Britain on a short tour with his band. Four numbers were committed to tape, of which "Ridin' on the L&N" and "All My Life" appear on this collection.

Paul Butterfield recording with John Mayall

The "John Mayall's Bluesbreakers with Paul Butterfield" EP was released as Decca DFE-R 8673 on January 6th 1967 and has since become one of the most sought after items from Mayall's time with Decca records as the record appeared only in Britain due to contractual conditions being imposed by Elektra records, Paul Butterfield's label, restricting the release to the UK. The album "A Hard Road" was released as Decca LK / SKL 4853 on February 17th 1967 and gained a US release as London Records LL / PS 502. Housed in a striking cover, featuring a picture of the Bluesbreakers painted by John Mayall himself, the record attained a British chart position of number 10. The album also silenced critics who felt Mayall would be unable to sustain the loss of Eric Clapton.

However, any sense of line-up stability in the Bluesbreakers didn't last long. In April 1967 Aynsley Dunbar joined former Yardbirds lead guitarist Jeff Beck in his new group. Dunbar's replacement, Mickey Waller, was in the Bluesbreakers for only a month before he too departed, ironically to replace Aynsley Dunbar in the Jeff Beck Group due to Dunbar leaving to form his own outfit, The Aynsley Dunbar Retaliation. Filling Waller's shoes came a young drummer previously with The Cheynes and The Bo Street Runners, Mick Fleetwood, who immediately entered the studio with Mayall, Peter Green and John McVie on April 19th to record the single "Double Trouble" (Decca F 12621), released on June 2nd 1967. By the time the record had appeared, both Mick Fleetwood and Peter Green had departed from The Bluesbreakers to form Fleetwood Mac with guitarist Jeremy Spencer and bassist Bob Brunning.

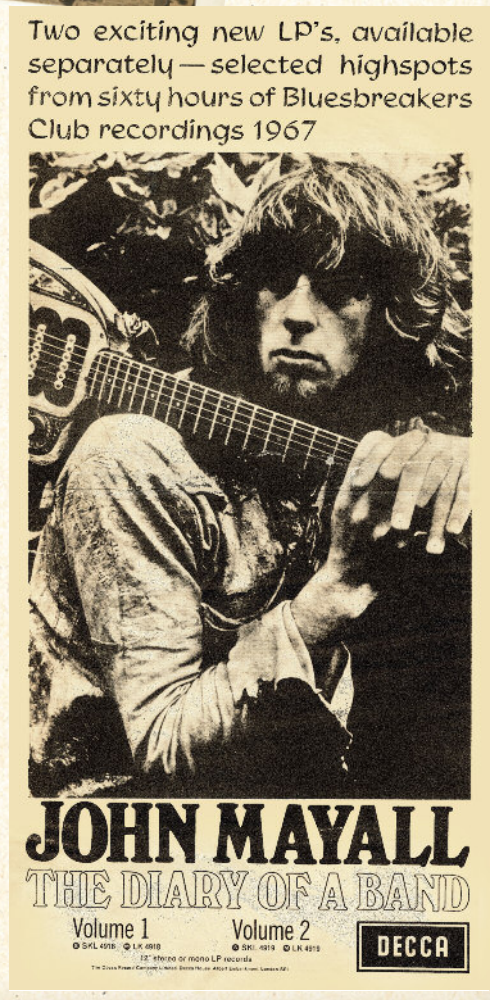
In the intervening month, Mayall had found a replacement drummer in Keef Hartley, a twenty-three year old from Preston in Lancashire, whose musical pedigree included replacing Ringo Starr in 1962 as drummer in Rory Storm and the Hurricanes when Ringo left to join The Beatles. Two years later Hartley played with The Artwoods, featuring Ronnie Wood's brother Art and future Deep Purple keyboard player Jon Lord. Mayall had met Hartley when the two had guested on sessions for blues man Champion Jack Dupree. Hartley made his recording debut with John Mayall on May 1st 1967, when the pair entered Decca's West Hampstead studios to record tracks for the album "Blues Alone". The project was destined for release on the Ace of Clubs mid-price label, and Decca consented to let Mayall experiment in the studio, playing all instruments, except the drums, himself. It speaks for Mayall's ability as a musician that he recorded and completed all twelve tracks for the album in just one day. "Blues Alone" was released as Ace of Clubs ACL / SCL 1243 in November 1967.

Despite the welcome diversion of a day's recording with Keef Hartley, Mayall still had a guitarist vacancy to fill. Initially the role was fulfilled by Terry Edmonds, who then departed to join the group Ferris Wheel, making way for a more suitable candidate. At a concert in Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire in 1966, Mayall had first met his new guitarist. Arriving at the venue, Mayall discovered that Eric Clapton was unable to turn up for the show. A young Hatfield resident by the name of Mick Taylor had been loitering in the venue and offered his services as guitarist that evening, telling Mayall that he knew The Bluesbreakers repertoire from their albums and live performances. Not being in any position to refuse, Mayall agreed that Taylor could join the band on stage that night. By the end of the evening Taylor had impressed Mayall with his technique and musical maturity. John Mayall now hastily located Taylor and invited him to join The Bluesbreakers. He also took the opportunity to expand his group by adding a horn section of Chris Mercer and Rip Kant. Finally on July 11th and 12th this new incarnation of John Mayall's Bluesbreakers entered the studio to record their next album. With the ever-present Mike Vernon assuming the production role and Gus Dudgeon engineering, work commenced on a project to be known as "Crusade". The title was indeed apt, as Mayall had commented that he felt that his life was a musical crusade to find a wider audience for the blues. As such, the latest Mayall's Bluesbreakers offering was to feature six songs originally recorded by John's blues heroes.

The opening track, "Oh, Pretty Woman" was originally recorded by guitarist Albert King, whose recent signing to US label Stax was owed in part to Mayall's constant promotion of King's repertoire. The recording of Sonny Boy Williamson's "Checkin' Up on My Baby", was preceded by Mayall commenting to producer Mike Vernon that he hoped there were no technical problems as he only wanted to run through the track once to ensure the track had the vitality and energy it required! "Crusade" was released as Decca LK / SKL 4890 on September 1st 1967 and remains one of Mayall's favourite albums. It fared well in the UK album charts reaching a respectable number 8. It also marked John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers first appearance in the American album chart, albeit peaking at number 136.

However, the two weeks prior to the album's release saw yet more line-up changes within Mayall's band. John McVie made the decision to pursue a career with Peter Green and Mick Fleetwood in their newly formed Fleetwood Mac, his replacement being Paul Williams. In the horn section there were changes too, with Rip Kant being replaced by former Graham Bond Organisation saxophonist Dick Heckstall-Smith.

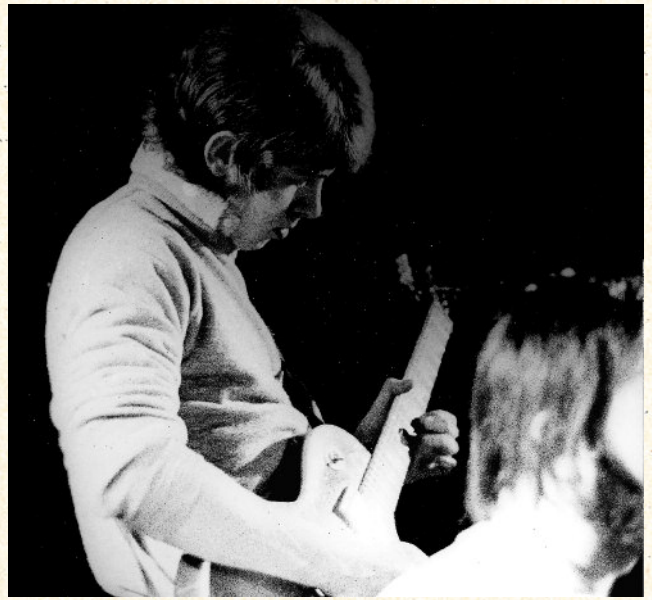
On September 14th and 15th two sides of Mayall's next single were recorded at Decca studios, "Suspicions Part One" and "Suspicions Part Two". Although showcasing the talent of his new band, upon its release as Decca F 12684 on October 20th 1967, the single failed to chart. The closing months of 1967 saw John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers performing extensively throughout the British Isles and Europe, with Mayall recording a fascinating audio diary of


Two exciting new LP's, available separately — selected highspots from sixty hours of Bluesbreakers Club recordings 1967
JOHN MAYALL
THE DIARY OF A BAND
Volume 1
Volume 2
DECCA

Above: At Brighton University in 1968, from left to right: John Mayall, Andy Fraser, Keef Hartley, Dick Heckstall-Smith, Mick Taylor and Chris Mercer.
Top Right: Bluesbreakers Summer 1968: John Mayall, Mick Taylor, Jon Hiseman, Tony Reeves, Dick Heckstall-Smith and Chris Mercer
Below: Bluesbreakers in early 1968: Dick Heckstall-Smith, John Mayall, Mick Taylor, Keef Hartley, Andy Fraser and Chris Mercer.

their musical exploits, released in February 1968 as the albums "Diary of a Band Volume One" (Decca LK / SKL 4918) and "Diary of a Band Volume Two" (Decca LK / SKL 4919), attaining respective UK album chart positions of number 27 and 28.

By the time the two "Diary" albums were released in Britain, John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers had made their first journey across the Atlantic to undertake a four-week tour of the United States, comprising of extended engagements in New York, Detroit, San Francisco and Los Angeles. The tour was a success by any standards, kicking off with a two-week residency at the Café a Go-Go in New York. A three date booking at the Whisky a Go-Go in Los Angeles had to be extended by a further four nights due to demand and the tour reached its conclusion by a week of shows at the Fillmore West in San Francisco with the Bluesbreakers sharing a bill with The Jimi Hendrix Experience and Mayall's blues hero Albert King. The American visit had brought Mayall's music to an eager new audience and the four-week experience left a lasting impression on John. The band's return home saw their line-up swelled by recruitment of trumpet player (and occasional violinist) Henry Lowther into their ranks and the release of the single "Picture on the Wall" (Decca F12732) on February 9th, the product of a session on December 4th and 5th 1967. The single featured a guest appearance on guitar by ex-Bluesbreaker and now Fleetwood Mac frontman, Peter Green. This release would also be the last to feature Keef Hartley as by the end of March 1968 he had departed the Mayall camp and would soon form his own band, producing a series of well-received albums for Deram records which utilised many of the musicians Hartley had worked with in various incarnations of John Mayall's band. Prior to Hartley's departure, bassist Keith Tillman had made way for Andy Fraser in March, who in turn left after a few weeks, soon coming to prominence when teaming with Paul Kossoff, Paul Rogers and Simon Kirke to form Free. Fraser's replacement was the excellent bass player Tony Reeves who was schooled in jazz traditions and techniques and had previously performed with the nineteen-piece New Jazz Orchestra. The now vacant drum chair in the Bluesbreakers was taken by another ex-New Jazz Orchestra musician, Jon Hiseman.



Hiseman left that outfit in April 1966 to replace Ginger Baker in the Graham Bond Organisation after Baker had left to form Cream with Eric Clapton and Jack Bruce. Although Ginger Baker was a tough act to follow, Hiseman proved more than capable of replacing Baker; indeed he acquired a considerable reputation as a drum virtuoso in his own right. When the Graham Bond Organisation disbanded in chaotic circumstances in late spring of 1967, Hiseman joined Georgie Fame's band.

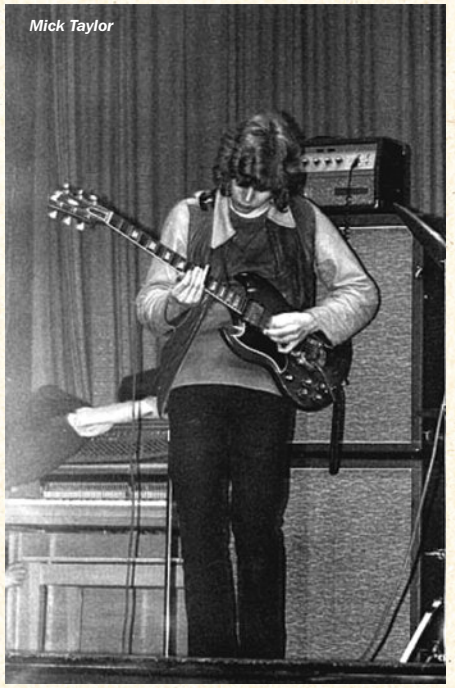
It was whilst working with Fame that Jon got a call from Graham Bond, (who had by this time assembled a new band), asking him to stand in on drums for one concert as his usual percussionist was unable to perform. Hiseman agreed to assist Bond and turned in his usual excellent performance, unaware that John Mayall was in the audience that evening. Impressed with Jon Hiseman's virtuosity, Mayall drove to Hiseman's house and waited three hours for the drummer to return, at which point Mayall promptly offered him the role of drummer in his new line-up of the Bluesbreakers. This new incarnation of the Bluesbreakers was to have a more jazz based feel than previous line-ups, (which was somewhat inevitable considering the musical pedigree of its new members), and the new band undertook the usual rigorous touring schedule, gaining considerable acclaim in the process. On April 3rd 1968, Mayall took his new band into the recording studio for the first time to begin work on a conceptual piece based on his own personal life experiences to be entitled "Bare Wires".

In the constantly expansive musical climate of the time, the influences of rock music, blues and jazz were being blended together by many artists such as Jimi Hendrix, Cream and Traffic to produce records that demanded close attention from the

listener. The emphasis was now on albums which could accommodate longer pieces of music and experimentation was encouraged. None of this was lost on Mayall, and although his new album would be completed in just four sessions on April 3rd, 9th, 24th and 30th 1968, it would reveal John Mayall as keen and as capable of studio innovation as his contemporaries. For the first time Mayall would share production duties with long-time Bluesbreaker producer Mike Vernon.

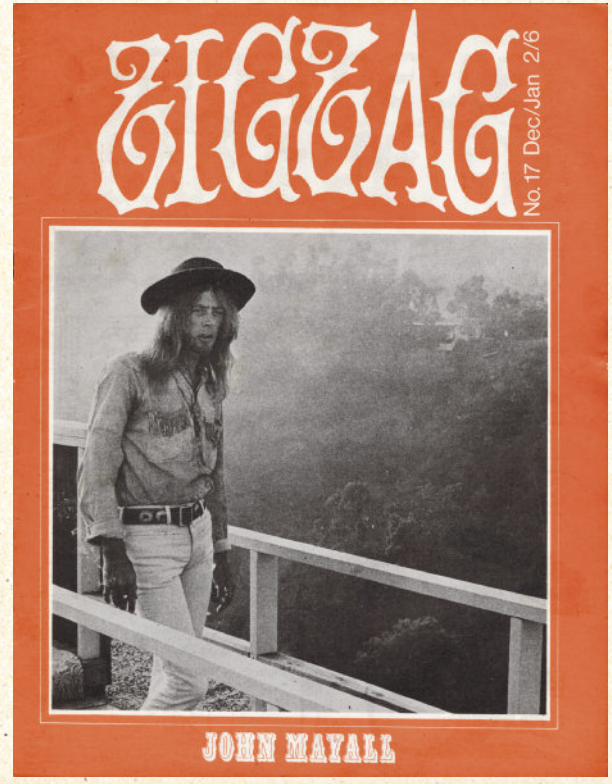
The first side of the album was to comprise a song cycle composed by Mayall, the "Bare Wires Suite", consisting of seven short compositions cross fading into each other. From the opening section of the suite, (which featured Mayall backed only by a Harmonium that cross-faded into "Where Did I Belong", a soulful piece with violin backing by Henry Lowther), it was obvious that "Bare Wires" was to be a very different John Mayall record. The suite climaxed with the uplifting jazz rock number "Look in the Mirror", which featured an early recorded example of Jon Hiseman's dexterity with a double bass drum kit and wonderful solos from bassist Tony Reeves and Dick Heckstall-Smith (playing both tenor and soprano saxophones at once). The suite climaxed with a gong-crashing end following a whispered warning from John Mayall; "Don't stare at the mirror too long or you'll get cut by the pieces of splintered glass".

Although "Bare Wires Suite" was the dominating track on the album, other highlights included the Mick Taylor composed "Hartley Quits", (inspired by their recently departed drummer), and the innovatively arranged "No Reply" which featured the new Bluesbreakers horn section in full flight. At the beginning of May, with the album completed, Mayall took his new band on the road and worked solidly until the end of July 1968. As a precursor to the release of John's latest album, Decca selected "No Reply" for release as the A-side of a single (Decca F12792), issued on June 7th. Two weeks later, on June 21st, "Bare Wires" appeared as Decca LK / SKL 4945 in both mono and stereo formats, eventually reaching number three in the UK album listings and becoming John's highest charting album. In the USA the album was released as London PS 537 in stereo only and gained a placing of number 59, Mayall's best chart performance across the Atlantic to date.


Mick Taylor

By July 1968, John Mayall was exhausted both mentally and physically from the vigorous schedule of Bluesbreaker concerts and of keeping a seven-piece band on the road. Following his excursions into jazz he was also striving for musical nourishment in new directions and made the dramatic decision to disband the "Bare Wires" band half way through a German tour, retaining only the services of Mick Taylor. Mayall's decision to break up what many considered one of his best ever groups surprised many and generated headlines in the British music press. Indeed, the "Bare Wires" group's nucleus of Jon Hiseman, Dick Heckstall-Smith and Tony Reeves joined forces with keyboard player Dave Greenslade and guitarist James Litherland to form the acclaimed Colosseum within months of Mayall dispensing with their services.

Upon the completion of live commitments, Mayall set about assembling a smaller and more permanent nucleus of musicians to



back him. Deciding to dispense with the Bluesbreakers moniker, John recruited Steve Thompson on bass and added powerful drummer Colin Thompson, (who had previously played with Zoot Money) into the ranks. As soon as he had formed a new band, John Mayall headed to Los Angeles for a three-week holiday. He was to stay in a house in Laurel Canyon, the chosen residence of many California-based musicians. John took the opportunity to relax and socialise with like-minded artists, such as the members of the

blues band Canned Heat, (who had just scored US chart success with the single "On the Road Again"). Mayall's experiences on holiday made a very deep impression, moving him enough to write a series of songs that put those experiences to music and were to rank as some of his strongest work. He was later to comment that this material was some of the easiest to write as each song was simply a chapter in the story of his visit to Los Angeles.

Upon his return to London his new band debuted at the 8th National Jazz and Blues Festival at Kempton Race Course on 11th August. Following a show at Mother's Club in Birmingham on the 25th he immediately went into the studio with his new band and co-producer Mike Vernon. Sessions lasted only three days, from August 26th to the 28th, by which time John Mayall had completed his eighth album for Decca records, "Blues from Laurel Canyon". Considering the speed at which the album was recorded, it is indeed remarkable that the final product was of such quality and proved to be so enduring. Of the material recorded, "Walking on Sunset" was a typical Mayall work, being a straight forward solid R&B based tune with a fine Mick Taylor solo. The Organ led rocking blues of "2401", was a song which name-checked the notorious band of LA groupies The GTO's, whilst "Miss James" was a wonderful example of Mayall's organ playing ability. The album's major opus was "Fly Tomorrow", a track that began with a restrained introduction featuring a hypnotic Tabla pattern before the band gradually picked up the melody and turned the ambient introduction into a storming Mick Taylor dominated tour-de-force. "Fly Tomorrow" was a superb closing track to one of his finest albums. Overall, the "Blues From Laurel Canyon" sessions saw the smaller band of Taylor, Thompson and Allen giving Mayall's music much more room to breathe, and it gave Mick Taylor's splendid guitar work a chance to shine. John later commented that the album was the first to really demonstrate the young guitarist's ability. Upon the completion of the album Mayall took his new band on the road, undertaking as intensive a schedule as he had pursued with any of his groups and returned to the USA to tour as a headlining act in September. This highly successful tour saw Mayall play at such prestigious venues as the Fillmore East and Fillmore West and enhanced his growing stature stateside.

The fruits of the band's August recording sessions finally appeared in early November. The album "Blues from Laurel Canyon", housed in a sleeve once again designed by Mayall, was released as Decca LK/SKL 4972, reaching a UK chart high of number 33. In America the album peaked at number 68 on the US chart. Although not as successful as "Bare Wires", "Blues from Laurel Canyon" firmly established Mayall's reputation on both sides of the Atlantic. The release of the album coincided with a triumphant show at the Royal Festival Hall in London on November 16th. To support the release of "Blues from Laurel Canyon", John Mayall undertook an extensive series of European concerts. The "Laurel Canyon" band lasted until January 1969 when Steve Thompson departed to be replaced by Keith Tillman (who had served a stint with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers between October 1967 and March 1968). Following a series of British dates and a tour of Switzerland, Mayall and band returned once more to the USA in February. The US visit gave way to an extensive German tour in May, following which Mick Taylor got a call from Mick Jagger with an offer to audition to join the Rolling Stones on their forthcoming world tour. Taylor duly accepted. Colin Allen also left John Mayall at this time to join Scottish band Stone the Crows. Faced with these enforced line-

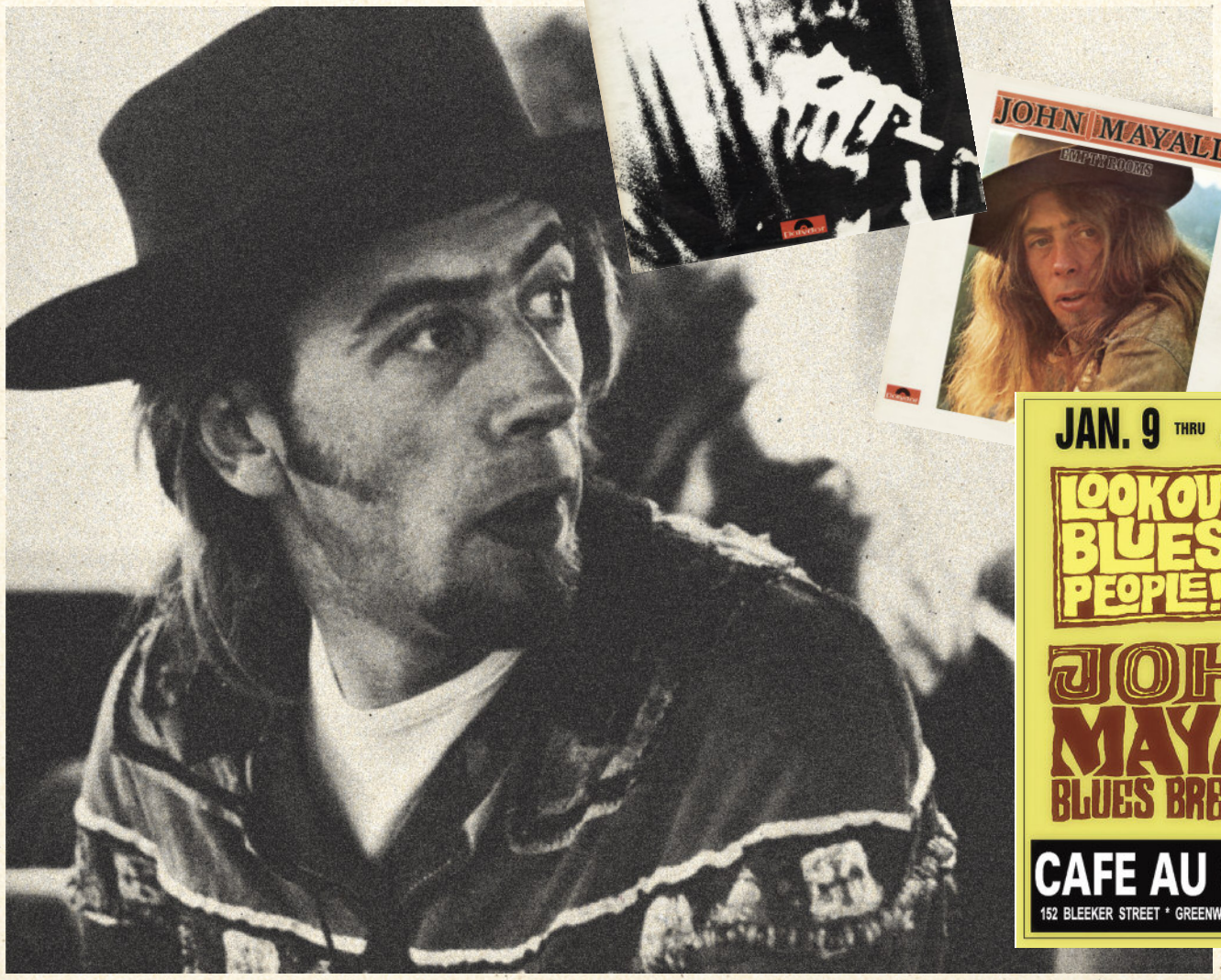
John Mayall, Steve Thompson and Jon Mark

up changes Mayall decided to pursue a musical idea that he had entertained for some time. Going against all musical conventions of the day, he chose to form a band without a percussionist.

In June 1969 John Mayall brought bassist Steve Thompson back into the fold and he recruited saxophonist and flautist Johnny Almond and acoustic guitarist Jon Mark to form his new outfit. Eschewing the use of any percussionist and utilizing Mark on nylon string acoustic guitar led to much coverage in the British music press. Mayall would explain his desire to branch out musically thus; "I wanted to try an entirely different style of music altogether. My main inspiration was the music of Jimmy Guiffre, a jazz musician who wrote and performed music for a group without a drummer. He experimented with different instrumental line-ups with his musicians and I felt I should do the same".

Exploring the jazz side of Mayall's musical psyche would bring a great deal of attention and praise to John's new quartet, who made their live debut on June 5th 1969 at The Golden Torch in London. The public reaction to Mayall's new direction took him by surprise. He later commented; "People looked at what I was doing as being something that was revolutionary, whereas I saw it as a reworking of the music Jimmy Guiffre had done, creating a blues extension of a jazz idea. I never thought it would be so critically praised. To me it was a fun and exciting thing to do. I believed in the music and put everything into it".

In July 1969 Mayall's new band ventured to the United States for an extensive American tour which included two nights at the Fillmore East in New York City. The concert on July 12th was recorded by John's new record label, Polydor for release as his first album for the label. Issued in November 1969, "The Turning Point" (Polydor 583 571) reached number 11 in the UK and number 32 on the US Billboard chart. Featuring material such as "Room to Move" and "California", the album was a hit with the newly emerging FM radio stations in America. Mayall would later reflect; "By the time we played the Fillmore East, the music had already been tried and tested in Europe, so we were feeling confident that it would be equally well received in the USA". The enthusiastic reaction to "The Turning Point" led to the album becoming Mayall's first Gold selling record in America.



In January 1970 John Mayall began work on his second album for Polydor, continuing to work without a drummer and retaining his Turning Point group of musicians. Recording began at Advision studios and De Lane Lea studios in London and was completed at Broadway studios in New York and Larrabee studios in Los Angeles in March 1970. By the close of sessions Steve Thompson had been replaced by bassist Larry Taylor, whose playing had graced recordings by Jerry Lee Lewis and Canned Heat. The album "Empty Rooms" was released as Polydor 583 580 in April 1970 and featured excellent material such as "Don't Waste My Time", "Something New", "Counting the Days" and "Waiting for the Right Time" which assisted in the album reaching number 9 in the UK and number 33 in the USA. By the time of the album's appearance, John Mayall had left England to permanently reside in California. This move also led to the departure of Jon Mark and Johnny Almond who soon formed the group Mark-Almond, recording a series of innovative albums for Blue Thumb records in America and EMI's Harvest label in Britain.

Mayall made his final appearance as a British resident at the Bath Festival at Shepton Mallett, Somerset on June 27th 1970 with a band comprising Peter Green on guitar, Rod Mayall on organ, Ric Grech on bass and Aynsley Dunbar on drums. Once in California John continued to work with Larry Taylor and assembled his first all American group of musicians for his next album. "Larry Taylor suggested that I bring Harvey Mandel into the new band" Mayall later reflected. "When he mentioned that Harvey might be interested in working with me I didn't hesitate to say 'yes'. I had been aware of his work for some time and thought he was a highly original guitarist". Also recruited was electric violinist Don "Sugarcane" Harris, a marvellous musician who had recorded as half of the duo Don and Dewey in the late 1950's and had gone on to be a highly respected session musician and solo artist, working with musicians as diverse as Johnny Otis and Frank Zappa. Still avoiding the use of a drummer, Mayall returned to Larrabee studios in July to record the album "USA Union".

Issued as Polydor 2425 020 in November 1970, the album became John's first American top thirty hit, reaching number 22. In Britain the record fared less well, reaching number 50.

Despite its low British chart placing, the album did feature the excellent "Nature's Disappearing", a protest against environmental pollution featuring solos by Harvey Mandel and "Sugarcane" Harris, along with material such as "Off the Road" and "Crying". John would comment; "The chemistry between the members of the band took some time to develop. Harvey was such a wall of sound that his presence, whilst very welcome, also revealed some flaws in the idea of working without a drummer. As a studio band it worked well, but as a live act that group wasn't as successful as Harvey needed some volume to create his sound".

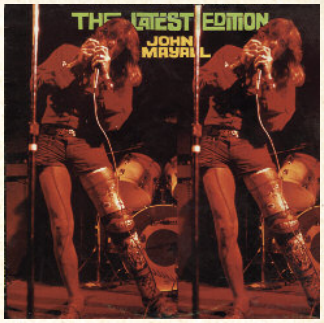
Increasing American success led to Mayall's new band being booked into increasingly large venues. Mayall later added; "We were booked to play the Forum in Los Angeles as an opening act and something had happened to Harvey Mandel. At the last minute Albert King had to fill in for him. It was during that set that I realized that the music sounded a little empty and wasn't really happening. As a result I decided to add drums into a band once more".

The latter months of 1970 were spent touring, during which time John Mayall hatched plans for his next album. He would later explain; "The "Back to the Roots" album project came about in a desire to emulate something which had been done in jazz circles. I wanted to gather together an assemblage of all the musicians I'd previously worked with, mix them up in various line-ups and see what happened". Recorded in London and Los Angeles, the double album would see Mayall reunited with such alumni as Eric Clapton, Mick Taylor, Johnny Almond and Keef Hartley, alongside members of his current group. "Recording an album in two locations had its own problems" Mayall later recalled. "I was travelling around the world with multi-track tapes resulting in a Los Angeles based rhythm section playing with a guitarist in London without ever having met!" Issued in June 1971, the double album "Back to the Roots" reached number 31 in the UK and number 52 in the USA.

The complications of recording an album in two different countries in the midst of a hectic touring schedule led Mayall to slim down his line-up of musicians for his next album project, the more sedate "Memories". Recorded in July 1971, the album featured such material as "Nobody Cares" and the album's evocative title track and was graced with the playing of Larry Taylor on bass and Jerry McGee from legendary instrumental group The Ventures on lead guitar. Released in the Autumn of 1971, "Memories" spawned a further extensive series of live commitments and led to Mayall considering his next musical direction. In September 1971 John decided to take some time out to produce the album "The Devil's Harmonica" by legendary Blues harmonica player Shaky Jake Harris, utilising the talents of the ever present Larry Taylor on bass, guitarist Freddy Robinson and drummer Ron Selico. These sessions proved inspirational and led to the formation of Mayall's next band. Recruiting Taylor, Robinson and Selico, John also added trumpet player Blue Mitchell and saxophonist Clifford Solomon to form a new group that would fuse the worlds of jazz and blues.

Undertaking an American tour in November and December 1971, Mayall's new band was greeted with an ecstatic audience response at each concert in reaction to a live set that saw a splendid group of musicians shine on stage. Recordings made in Boston and New York were mixed and compiled to form the album "Jazz Blues Fusion", released in the Spring of 1972. Although failing to chart in Britain, the album reached number 19 on the US Billboard jazz chart and number 64 on the Billboard Hot 100. Encouraged by the reaction to his jazz and blues fusion project on both record and stage, John went one step further by expanding his group still further. Ron Selico departed the fold to be replaced by old colleague Keef Hartley and Mayall's new group was augmented by the presence of Victor Gaskin on string bass, Ernie Watts on tenor saxophone, Charles Owen on tenor and soprano saxophones and flute and Fred Jackson on baritone and tenor saxophones. A series of live dates with this new line-up included a memorable series of performances at the Whisky A Go Go in Los Angeles in July which was recorded for posterity and would form the album "Moving On". Sadly, this excellent album which featured Mayall's new band in full flight, failed to break into the Billboard Top 100, reaching number 116 and made no chart impression in Britain.

With two live albums behind him, John Mayall's next album would see him return to the recording studio with legendary musician and Don Nix producing to record the lengthy double album set "Ten Years Are Gone" in May 1973. The sessions saw Don "Sugarcane" Harris reunite with Mayall once more, along with many musicians from the "Moving On" band such as Keef Hartley, Freddy Robinson, Blue Mitchell, Victor Gaskin and saxophonist and flautist Red Holloway. Notably absent from the sessions was Larry Taylor, but the albums successfully fused the worlds of blues, jazz, R&B and rock, creating a unique contemporary sounding record of which "Driving 'til the Break of Day" was a particular highlight. Once again, John took to the road to promote his new album, turning in a series of polished concerts. By March 1974 John Mayall had spent a decade as a



respected recording artist; a milestone that appeared to herald yet another change in musical direction, albeit one that saw him return to the electric blues that had so enhanced his much deserved reputation.

Working with noted producer Tom Wilson, (who had previously supervised the creation of albums by John Coltrane, Bob Dylan, Frank Zappa and Eric Burdon and the Animals among others), Mayall began work on his final album for Polydor records. The sessions saw yet another new band emerge featuring the retained Red Holloway and joined by the returning Larry Taylor and new faces Soko Richardson on drums and lead guitarists Randy Resnick and Hightide Harris. Material such as “Gasoline Blues” was arguably some of the most straight ahead rock music recorded by John Mayall. The song gained a degree of radio airplay when issued as a single, but failed to assist the album “The Latest Edition” to make an impression on the album charts either side of the Atlantic.

Partly as a result of his declining commercial fortunes, John Mayall departed Polydor soon after the release of “The Latest Edition” and signed to the American label ABC Records. He would record six albums in just over three years for the label, beginning with the album “New Year, New band, New Company”. John then found a home with the UK based DJM label. He subsequently continued to record for a variety of labels, including a spell with Island Records, Silvertone and more recently Eagle Rock. Throughout the years John Mayall has remained a vital live performer and continued to be as passionate about the blues as ever.

In 2003 Mayall celebrated his 70th birthday and undertook an extensive tour which climaxed in Liverpool with a 70th birthday concert to raise funds for UNICEF, which saw Mayall reunited with Eric Clapton and Mick Taylor. In 2005 John Mayall recorded and released his 55th album, “Road Dogs”, and was awarded an OBE in November of that year. At the time of writing John Mayall has recently recorded and released his 57th album, the impressive “Tough”, for Eagle Rock, a remarkably muscular work which belies John’s age, and is in the process of undertaking a lengthy World tour to promote his work. Mayall’s career is often seen in the simplistic terms by lesser informed writers in the simplistic context of viewing him as a catalyst that enabled other musicians to learn their craft before achieving greatness elsewhere. The music featured in this 4CD set covering Mayall’s first decade as a recording musician surely banishes such an immensely unjust point of view. In a world where music is constantly exposed to passing trends and fashion, John Mayall has always stayed true to his ideals, whilst never being afraid to challenge perceptions of what a blues musician should be. He is a legendary, unique figure and the recordings featured in this boxed set are not only an important part of his legacy, but that of British popular music as a whole. Most of all, they are a tribute to John Mayall’s musical integrity and genius.

Mark Powell

The Latest Edition line-up: Hightide Harris, Red Holloway, Larry Taylor, John Mayall, Soko Richardson and Randy Resnick

JOHN MAYALL • SO MANY ROADS • AN ANTHOLOGY • 1964-1974

PART ONE

1. Crawling Up A Hill
(John Mayall) TRO Essex Music Ltd.
℗ 1964 Decca Music Group Ltd.

2. Mr. James
(John Mayall) St. George Music Ltd.
℗ 1964 Decca Music Group Ltd.

3. When I'm Gone
(John Mayall) Getaway Music Ltd.
℗ 1965 Decca Music Group Ltd.

4. R&B Time
Incorporating: Night Train & Lucille
Night Train: (Jimmy Forrest, Oscar Washington, Lewis C. Simpkins) Carlin Music Corp./
Lucille: (Albert Collins, Richard Penniman) Universal/MCA Music Ltd.
℗ 1965 Decca Music Group Ltd.

5. Runaway
(John Mayall) Getaway Music Ltd.
℗ 1965 Decca Music Group Ltd.

6. What's The Matter With You
(John Mayall) Getaway Music Ltd
℗ 1965 Decca Music Group Ltd.

7. Crocodile Walk
(John Mayall) Getaway Music Ltd.
℗ 1965 Decca Music Group Ltd.

8. Blues City Shake Down
(John Mayall) Copyright Control
℗ 1965 Decca Music Group Ltd.

9. I'm Your Witchdoctor
(John Mayall) Getaway Music Ltd.
℗ 1965 Immediate Records Co. Ltd.

10. Telephone Blues
(John Mayall) Getaway Music Ltd.
℗ 1965 Charly Licensing APS/License Music

11. On Top Of The World
(John Mayall) Complete Music Ltd.
℗ 1968 Charly Licensing APS/License Music

12. They Call It Stormy Monday (Live)
(T-Bone Walker) Copyright Control
℗ 1969 Decca Music Group Ltd.

13. Have You Ever Loved A Woman
(Billy Myles) Lark Music Ltd.
℗ 1966 Decca Music Group Ltd.

14. All Your Love
(Otis Rush) Tristan Music Ltd.
℗ 1966 Decca Music Group Ltd.

15. Double Crossing Time
(Eric Clapton, John Mayall)
Getaway Songs Ltd.
℗ 1966 Decca Music Group Ltd.

16. Steppin' Out
(James Bracken) Jewel Music Publ. Co. Ltd.
℗ 1966 Decca Music Group Ltd.

17. What'd I Say
(Ray Charles) Carlin Music Corp.
℗ 1966 Decca Music Group Ltd.

18. Key To Love
(John Mayall) Getaway Music Ltd.
℗ 1966 Decca Music Group Ltd.

19. Parchman Farm
(Mose Allison) Marquis Music Co. Ltd.
℗ 1966 Decca Music Group Ltd.

20. Looking Back
(Johnny Guitar Watson)
Carlin Music Corp. / Palan Music Publ. Ltd.
℗ 1966 Decca Music Group Ltd.

21. So Many Roads
(Marshall Paul) Jewel Music Publ. Co. Ltd.
℗ 1966 Decca Music Group Ltd.

22. Long Night
(John Mayall, Steve Anglo) Copyright Control
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

23. Dust My Blues
(Elmore James, Joe Bihari)
Sparta Florida Music Group Ltd.
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

24. The Stumble
(Freddy King, Sonny Thompson) Lark Music Ltd.
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

PART TWO

1. You Don't Love Me
(Willie. C. Cobbs) Carlin Music Corp./
Tollie Music Ltd.
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

2. It's Over
(John Mayall) Getaway Music Ltd.
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

3. The Super-Natural
(Peter Green) Getaway Songs Ltd.
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

4. Sitting In The Rain
(John Mayall) Unichappell Music Inc.
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

5. Ridin' On The L & N
(Lionel Hampton, Dan Burley, James Sims)
Windswept Music (London) Ltd.
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

6. All My Life
(Jimmy Lee Robinson) Ardmore & Beechwood Ltd.
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

7. Double Trouble
(Otis Rush) Jewel Music Publ. Co. Ltd.
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

8. Suspicions (Part One)
(John Mayall) St. George Music Ltd.
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

9. Oh Pretty Woman
(A.C. Williams) Rondor Music (London) Ltd./
Warner Chappell
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

10. Snowy Wood
(Mick Taylor, John Mayall) Getaway Music Ltd.
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

11. Checkin' Up On My Baby
(Sonny Boy Williamson)
Jewel Music Publ. Co. Ltd.
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

12. No More Tears
(John Mayall) Getaway Music Ltd.
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

13. Brand New Start
(John Mayall) Getaway Music Ltd.
℗ 1967 Decca Music Group Ltd.

14. Picture On The Wall
(John Mayall) St. George Music Ltd.
℗ 1968 Decca Music Group Ltd.

15. Look In The Mirror
(John Mayall) St. George Music Ltd.
℗ 1968 Decca Music Group Ltd.

16. No Reply
(John Mayall, Michael John Taylor)
St. George Music Ltd.
℗ 1968 Decca Music Group Ltd.

17. Hartley Quits
(Michael John Taylor) St. Georges Music Ltd.
℗ 1968 Decca Music Group Ltd.

18. 2401
(John Mayall) St. George Music Ltd.
℗ 1968 Decca Music Group Ltd.

19. Walking On Sunset
(John Mayall) St. George Music Ltd.
℗ 1968 Decca Music Group Ltd.

20. Medicine Man
(John Mayall) St. George Music Ltd.
℗ 1968 Decca Music Group Ltd.

21. Miss James
(John Mayall) St. George Music Ltd.
℗ 1968 Decca Music Group Ltd.

22. Fly Tomorrow
(John Mayall) St. Georges Music Ltd.
℗ 1968 Decca Music Group Ltd.

PART THREE

1. The Laws Must Change
(John Mayall) St. George Music Ltd.
℗ 1969 Polydor Inc.

2. California
(John Mayall, Fischer Thompson)
St. George Music Ltd.
℗ 1969 Polydor Inc.

3. Room To Move
(John Mayall) St. George Music Ltd.
℗ 1969 Polydor Inc.

4. Sleeping By Her Side
(John Mayall)
℗ 1969 UMG Recordings, Inc.

5. Don't Waste My Time
(John Mayall, Steve Thompson)
St. George Music Ltd.
℗ 1969 UMG Recordings, Inc.

6. Something New
(John Mayall, Mark) St. George Music Ltd.
℗ 1969 UMG Recordings, Inc.

7. Waiting For The Right Time
(John Mayall)
℗ 1970 Polydor Inc.

8. Counting The Days
(John Mayall)
℗ 1970 Polydor Inc.

9. Off The Road
(John Mayall)
℗ 1970 UMG Recordings, Inc.

10. Crying
(John Mayall)
℗ 1970 UMG Recordings, Inc.

11. Nature's Disappearing
(John Mayall)
℗ 1970 UMG Recordings, Inc.

12. Accidental Suicide
(John Mayall)
℗ 1971 UMG Recordings, Inc.

13 Prisons On The Road
(John Mayall)
℗ 1971 UMG Recordings, Inc.

14. Unanswered Questions
(John Mayall)
℗ 1971 UMG Recordings, Inc.

PART FOUR

1. Television Eye
(John Mayall)
℗ 1971 UMG Recordings, Inc.

2. Memories
(John Mayall)
℗ 1971 UMG Recordings, Inc.

3. Nobody Cares
(John Mayall) Hibiscus Music Company
℗ 1971 UMG Recordings, Inc.

4. Good Time Boogie
(John Mayall)
℗ 1972 Polydor Inc.

5. Got To Be This Way
(John Mayall)
℗ 1972 Polydor Inc.

6. Mess Around
(John Mayall)
℗ 1972 UMG Recordings, Inc.

7. Country Road
(John Mayall)
℗ 1972 Polydor Inc.

8. Moving On
(John Mayall)
℗ 1972 Polydor Inc.

9. Things Go Wrong
(John Mayall)
℗ 1972 Universal Records,
a Division of UMG Recordings, Inc.

10. High Pressure Living
(John Mayall)
℗ 1972 Universal Records,
a Division of UMG Recordings, Inc.

11. Driving 'til The Break Of Day
(John Mayall)
℗ 1973 Universal Records,
a Division of UMG Recordings, Inc.

12. Burning Sun
(John Mayall)
℗ 1973 Universal Records,
a Division of UMG Recordings, Inc.

13. Little Kitten
(John Mayall)
℗ 1974 Universal Records,
a Division of UMG Recordings, Inc.

14. Gasoline Blues
(John Mayall)
℗ 1974 Polydor Inc.

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Designed by **Phil Smee** at *Waldo's Design & Dream Emporium*, St Albans

UMC would like to thank: **Justin Brown, John Chadwick, Arif Mahmud, Dawn Marecki, Steve Marsh, Liz Rennie** and **Emine Rifat.**

Grateful thanks to **Jayne Byrne** and **Peter A. Matthews** at *Universal Music Tape Facility* for much appreciated and invaluable assistance with master tape research and to **Craig Thompson** at *The Audio Archiving Company.*

The official John Mayall website: www.johnmayall.com